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Bridge Tips Tannah Hirsch

25th March 2010 North-South vulnerable. South deals

	NORTH ♠ K 6 3 ♥ A 5 ♦ K 7 6 4 3 ♣ 10 9 6	
WEST ♠ Q 9 5 2 ♥ K J 8 2 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ 7 3		EAST ♠ A J 10 7 ♥ Q 10 9 7 4 3 ♦ J 8 ♣ 2
	SOUTH ♠ 8 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A 5 2 ♣ A K Q J 8 5 4	

SOUTH 1 Club 3 Club 5 Club	WEST Pass 3 Heart All Pass	NORTH 1 Diamond 3 NT	EAST 1 Heart 4 Heart
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Opening lead: Two of ♥

Some knowledge of the mathematics of the game is indispensable if you are to choose the best line. For example, the chances of finding a specific card in a particular defender's hand are 50 percent. The odds of a 3-2 division of five missing cards are 68 percent. The difference is considerable.

East-West took advantage of the vulnerability to push North-South out of a cold three no trump into a touchy five-club game. (South might have considered bidding four no trump instead!) Declarer missed an early opportunity and paid the price.

The opening heart lead was won in dummy and a heart was ruffed. Trumps were drawn in two rounds and declarer led a diamond, intending to duck it into the East hand. When West contributed the nine, declarer was forced to rise with the king and he continued with the ace and another diamond, hoping East would be forced to win. When West won, a spade shift gave the defenders two tricks in that suit for down one.

The contract was lost at the very first trick. Instead of going up with the ace of hearts, declarer should have exchanged red-suit losers by playing low from dummy! East is forced to win this trick and is powerless to harm declarer. On the heart return declarer discards a diamond from hand while winning with the table's ace. Trumps are drawn in two rounds, the ace and king of diamonds are cashed and a diamond ruff sets up two long cards in the suit. The ten of trumps is the entry to the table to cash the long diamonds for two spade discards, and declarer emerges with an overtrick!

e-mail: gorenbridge@aol.com